

## Strategy 2: Explore Images from Films of Best-Selling Novels

Hollywood producers adapt best-selling novels into films not only because the novel appeals to a large audience, but also because the images of the book provide a powerful visual guide for the director. The details of character, setting, and action scenes in the novel create an imaginary storyboard that simplifies the photographic decisions of the director. By taking excerpts from popular novels made into films and juxtaposing them against the representative scenes in the film versions, one can visualize the relationship between words and images.

### Activity 1

You may choose to work with a partner for this activity. First, you and your partner will through each selected scene and then view each film clip. As you view each film clip, take note of time frames. How long did it take you to read the passage? How long did it take to play out the passage on screen? How are the descriptions of the actions written as compared to how they are played out by the actors? Next, highlight the brushstrokes used in each passage.

#### Sample Novel/Film Passages

##### 1. Raiders of the Lost Ark by Robert Campbell

He stared at the bag, then at the idol in his hand, and then he was aware of a strange, distant noise, a rumbling like that of a great machine set in motion, a sound of things waking from a long sleep, roaring and tearing and creaking through the spaces of the Temple. ... For a split second nothing happened. And then there was a faint whirring noise, a creaking sound, and the walls of the chamber seemed to break open as giant metal spikes, like the jaws of some impossible shark, slammed together in the center of the chamber. (7)

##### 2. In God We Trust All Others Pay Cash (Film entitled, The Christmas Story) by Jean Shepherd

He swept up the plastic trophy, his symbol of superiority, and rushed out through the dining room and into the living room. Placing the lamp squarely in the middle of the library table, he aligned it exactly at the center of the front window. We trailed behind him, applauding and yipping. He was unrolling the cord, down on all fours.

"Where's the dang plug?"

"Behind the sofa."

My mother answered quietly, in a vaguely detached tone.

"Quick! Go out in the kitchen and get me an extension!"

Our entire world was strung together with "extensions." Outlets in our house were rare and coveted, each one buried under a Bakelite mound of three-way, seven-way, and ten-way plugs and

screw sockets, the entire mess caught in a twisted, snarling Gordian knot of frayed and cracked lamp cords, radio cords, and God knows what. Occasionally in some houses a critical point was reached, and one of these electric bombs went off, sometimes burning down whole blocks of homes, or more often blowing out the main fuse, plunging half the town into darkness. (92-93)

### 3. Jurassic Park by Michael Crichton

Nedry opened the car door, glancing back at the dinosaur to make sure it wasn't going to attack, and felt a sudden, excruciating pain in his eyes, stabbing like spikes into the back of his skull, and he squeezed his eyes shut and gasped with the intensity of it and threw up his hands to cover his eyes and felt the slippery foam trickling down both sides of his nose. Spit. The dinosaur had spit in his eyes.

Even as he realized it, the pain overwhelmed him, and he dropped to his knees, disoriented, wheezing. He collapsed onto his side, his cheek pressed to the wet ground, his breath coming in thin whistles, through the constant, ever-screaming pain that caused flashing spots of light to appear behind his tightly shut eyelids. (96)

### **Activity 2**

Choose one of the additional film excerpts located under Activity 2 on my website to write a scene for. You may choose a smaller excerpt from the clip if you like. Be sure to use brush strokes. When you have completed and revised your scene, highlight the brushstrokes that you used.

If you choose to work with a partner for activity 2, be sure to use a different color of writing utensil than your partner. I will be looking to see that both of you contributed to the writing and revisions equally.

Write on notebook paper. Skip lines, so that your revisions will be clearer.